

3. ACCESS ROADS

Definition and Purpose

A road system, temporary or permanent, installed for but not limited to transporting wood products from the harvest site. Usually a single lane truck road with turn-outs for vehicle passing and consisting of a series of cuts and fills.

Roads are important for fire access, harvesting, reforestation and other forest management activities. Well constructed roads will cause much less soil erosion than poorly constructed roads. Road location depends to a large extent on topography, property boundaries, stream locations, and the location of yarding areas or log decks. Good planning will keep potential log skidding distances to less than 1/4 mile. This will have an advantage to the logger and the landowner whose timber value will be higher due to its ease of access.

Conditions Where Practice Applies

Areas to be harvested and where volume per acre makes it necessary and economically feasible for an operator to install a road system.

Specifications

Pre-harvest planning is essential for proper road location. Implementation of the following BMPs will protect water quality.

- A. If possible haul roads should be built at least a year before harvest begins so that they have time to stabilize. Such roads will have a better chance of withstanding heavy use than freshly built roads.
- B. Provide a minimum width of 10 to 14 feet for a single track road. Increase width as necessary at curves and turnouts.
- C. Where possible and for good drainage, place roads on gentle side slopes rather than on ridgetops. Avoid wet flood plain soils where good drainage is difficult to establish and maintain.
- D. Roads should be placed outside of SMZ and should follow contour lines as much as possible with grades between 1 and 10%. Steeper gradients (11% plus) are permissible for short distances, usually not exceeding 200 feet. By breaking or changing grade frequently, less erosion problems will be encountered than on long, straight, continuous gradients.